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Elisabetta Bini[*]

Abstract: *»Ein transatlantischer Schock. Italiens Energiepolitik zwischen dem Mittelmeerraum und den EG 1967-1974«.* This article analyzes Italy's energy politics in the context of the 1973 "oil shock," by focusing on the policies carried out by the Italian government and by the State-owned oil company Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (National Hydrocarbon Agency, ENI) between the outbreak of the Six Day War in 1967 and the mid-1970s. It places Italy's oil politics in the framework of post-World War II international relations, and argues that Italy responded to oil producers' increased power much earlier than other consuming countries. In the 1950s and 1960s, ENI established an autonomous position in the international oil market, by offering oil producers wider control over their energy resources. Drawing on these policies, during and after the Six Day War and in the context of the 1973 "oil shock," ENI was able to pursue bilateral relations with producers, such as Libya, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and the USSR, which revolved around the exchange of oil for technical and economic aid and training. At the same time, the Italian government, through Foreign Minister Aldo Moro, linked in new and original ways the changes taking place in the Mediterranean with the process of détente. He promoted a dialogue between the European Economic Community (EEC) and Arab countries, around issues relating to security, peace and economic cooperation. However, Italy's policies increasingly clashed with US interpretations of the "oil shock." During the Energy Conference, held in Washington DC in February 1974, Italy aligned itself with the US position, and became an active member of the International Energy Agency (IEA), while at the same time continuing to promote forms of economic cooperation between the two sides of the Mediterranean.

Keywords: Italy, ENI, transatlantic relations, Six Day War, 1973 oil shock, EEC.

1. Introduction[1]

This article analyzes Italy's energy politics in the context of the 1973 "oil shock," by focusing on the policies carried out by the Italian government and

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[1] I wish to thank Rüdiger Graf, Giuliano Garavini and Francesco Petrini for their comments on previous versions of this article.

by the State-owned oil company *Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi* (National Hydrocarbon Agency, ENI) between the outbreak of the Six Day War in 1967 and the mid-1970s. As a country that lacked natural resources, Italy responded to oil producers' increased power much earlier than other consuming countries. Already in the 1950s, ENI established an autonomous position in the international oil market, by offering oil producers wider control over their energy resources. During and after the Six Day War and in the context of the 1973 "oil shock," Italy's Foreign Minister Aldo Moro, linked in new and original ways the changes taking place in the Mediterranean with the process of détente, by promoting a dialogue between the European Economic Community (EEC) and Arab countries, around issues relating to security, peace and economic cooperation. At the same time, with the support of the Italian government, ENI pursued a series of bilateral relations with producers, such as Libya, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and, increasingly, the USSR, which revolved around the exchange of oil for technical and economic aid and training. However, Italy's policies increasingly clashed with US interpretations of the energy crisis and the best way to face oil producers' growing international role. During the Energy Conference, held in Washington DC in February 1974, the Italy aligned itself to the US position, and became an active member of the International Energy Agency (IEA), while at the same time continuing to promote forms of economic cooperation between the two sides of the Mediterranean.

2. Challenging the "Seven Sisters"

As a country that lacks natural resources, Italy's national history has been characterized by a constant effort to develop autonomous sources of energy, by building hydroelectric power plants and searching for hydrocarbons domestically and internationally (Toninelli 1999). The Fascist regime established the state-owned company *Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli* (General Italian Oil Company, AGIP), in order to achieve Italy's energy autonomy from British and German coal, and oil from the Western Hemisphere. Founded in 1926, AGIP bought a 90% share of two Romanian oil companies, it imported and distributed Russian oil on the Italian market, and searched for oil in Northern Italy and in the Italian colonies – Libya, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia – as well as in Albania, an Italian protectorate since the end of the First World War. Despite its efforts, AGIP was unable to locate any significant sources of oil, and Italy continued to rely on the import of energy resources from abroad (Sapelli et al. 1993).

During the Second World War, most of the firm's refineries, pipelines and drilling equipment were either destroyed or heavily damaged. With the landing of the Allies in Sicily in the summer of 1943 and the division of Italy in two separate parts, the country's provisional government, with the support of the US, Great Britain, and international oil companies, promoted the liquidation of

AGIP. However, in April 1945, just a few days after the liberation of Milan, Enrico Mattei was nominated Special Administrator of AGIP Alta Italia with the task of supervising the company's activities in Northern Italy. He drew on the expertise of a small group of Italian geologists who had made important discoveries of natural gas (and later oil) in the Po Valley to argue that AGIP should be rebuilt and become a symbol of Italy's economic and national revival. In the early 1950s, with the support of members of the Christian Democratic Party (DC), Mattei lobbied for the establishment of ENI as the national hydrocarbon company for Italy. The firm, created in 1953, drew together a wide number of entities working in the exploration, refining, transport and distribution of oil and natural gas (Pozzi 2009; Pressenda and Sarale 1978).

During the 1950s and 1960s, ENI sought to overcome Italy's dependence on the international oil cartel. It challenged the presence of American and British oil companies in Italy, by establishing a monopoly over the exploration of hydrocarbons in the Po Valley, and persued autonomous relations with oil producing countries. ENI, through Mattei, advanced the idea that, as a country that had lost its colonies after the Second World War, Italy had a crucial role to play in guiding the process of decolonization by supporting the establishment of nationally independent countries and the pursuit of oil nationalism. The company's policies went hand-in-hand with those of the Italian government, led by the DC, which since the early 1950s argued that Italy should endorse the end of Brench and British imperial rule in the Mediterranean. It should become a bridge between Europe and the Arab world and guide colonies toward national independence by promoting their economic development. Italy's effort to carve out an autonomous position came to the fore during the mid-1950s, particularly after US President Dwight D. Eisenhower came to power. Following the Suez crisis, as the US pursued a more active policy in the Mediterranean, the Italian government pushed forward the idea that Italy could serve as a mediator between Arab nationalist leaders and the Atlantic Alliance. In 1957, it promoted what came to be known as the "Pella Plan," from the name of Italy's Minister of Foreign Affairs Giuseppe Pella. The Plan proposed to transform part of the debt Western European countries owed to the US for Marshall Plan aid into a special fund used to carry out development plans in the Middle East (Calchi Novati 1994; Brogi 1996; De Leonardis 2003).

ENI's definition of an autonomous policy took place in the context of the Suez crisis, and resulted from producers' growing efforts to redefine the rules of the international oil market. Mattei pointed out that producers represented both a threat and an economic resource for the countries that relied on their products. According to him, the politics pursued by the US and Western Europe were particularly short-sighted as they failed to understand the importance of oil producing countries' aspiration to economic development. Mattei argued that a new set of policies was needed, one that allowed smaller and independent oil companies to compete with the oil cartel in a free market. He pointed out

that such a system should be accompanied by the introduction of a multilateral development plan involving oil-producing and oil-consuming countries, and aim at increasing producers' industrial production and, eventually, establish consumer economies (Bini 2013).

Between the mid-1950s and the early 1960s, ENI challenged US, French and British oil interests in North Africa, Middle East and Subsaharan Africa by signing its own treaties with oil producers. While the international oil market was regulated by the so-called "50-50 rule," according to which oil-producing countries received 50% of the profits (Yergin 2011), ENI recognized oil producers as partners in the exploration and production of hydrocarbons. According to the treaties, the Italian company would be responsible – financially and technologically – for searching for hydrocarbons. Only in the case of success, oil-producing states would work side by side with ENI in developing their energy resources by participating in the management of mixed companies and having workers – including engineers, geologists and gas station attendants – trained by ENI in Italy. Such a system assured oil producers access to higher profits, and the possibility of acquiring know-how and controlling production. It also anticipated many of the changes that characterized the international oil market between the late 1960s and the 1970s (Maugeri 1994; Lomartire 2004; Pozzi 2009).

Besides establishing mixed companies, ENI instructed hundreds of students through the *Scuola di Studi Superiori sugli Idrocarburi* (Graduate School for the Study of Hydrocarbons), located in Milan, which aimed at creating an international elite that could be employed in the field of hydrocarbons. As the company established its presence in oil producing countries such as Egypt, Libya and Iran, ENI's graduate school became a way of building long-lasting ties with the new ruling classes in charge of defining the future of their countries. After attending the school, students often took on leading roles in state-owned oil companies, governments and universities, thus allowing ENI to maintain and strengthen its relations with oil producers (ENI 1957-1969).[2]

While ENI signed an agreement with Egypt in 1955 (Tonini 2003), the first treaty to introduce the so-called "Mattei formula" was signed in 1957 between ENI, the Iranian government and the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) (Tremolada 2011; Milano 2013). The treaty, which resulted from a request on the part of the Iranian government, established a mixed company, the *Société Irano-Italienne des Pétroles* (SIRIP), which was co-owned by AGIP and NIOC. According to the deal, AGIP Mineraria – ENI's affiliate in charge of exploring for oil and natural gas – would cover all the costs necessary for the exploration of oil, while SIRIP would participate in the expenses only in the case of success. The Iranian state would still receive 50% in royalties, while the other 50% would be divided in two equal parts, through a shared ownership of

[2] Archivio Storico ENI (ASE), Fondo ENI, Direzione Estera, b.202, f.1713.

a mixed company. The agreement established a partnership between a foreign oil company and an oil-producing country for the first time, and was followed by other contracts with Libya, Tunisia, Morocco and, increasingly, a range of Subsaharan African, Latin American and Asian countries (Bagnato 2004).

The contract between ENI and Iran spurred a strong reaction on the part of the US, Great Britain and international oil companies. The British worried that the treaty might lead other oil producers to embrace oil nationalism, while the State Department and the US embassy in Rome considered Mattei's actions as an expression of neutralism and a challenge to US policies in the oil-producing world (Nuti 1999). Shortly after the signing of the agreement, the US Embassy in Rome sent a telegram to the State Department, pointing out that the treaty could destabilize relations between oil producers and major oil companies, and affect US-Italian relations (*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960* 1993). The State Department pressured the Italian government to stop Mattei from challenging the "50-50 rule." Its greatest concern was not so much that ENI would undermine the position of US oil companies, but that it might encourage oil-producing countries to become more autonomous (Meyr 2004).

In 1959, ENI started pursuing a series of policies that challenged US oil politics toward Western Europe and in oil producing countries. That year, Mattei signed an agreement with the USSR to import crude oil in exchange for technical aid. According to the deal, ENI would have sent rubber and steel to the USSR, and would have contributed to building a pipeline from the Urals to East Germany, while Italy would have received crude oil for five years. The deal was renewed in 1961 for another four years, providing Italy with the equivalent of 14% of its oil imports, and the USSR with oil tankers, steel and rubber, and equipment for its chemical industry. Mattei's decision to sign a deal with the USSR had to do with the fact that the price of Soviet oil was much lower than that of any other country or oil company, and that ENI was looking for an outlet for its chemical products. Furthermore, Mattei wanted to use the agreement to retaliate against the forms of discrimination carried out by US and British oil companies against ENI (Bagnato 2003; Snegur 2013).

The State Department and the CIA reacted immediately to the treaty. In one of its weekly summaries, the CIA worried that the Italian government "might pave the way for future deals with the bloc, involving pipeline construction and Italian offers of drilling equipment and technical assistance in return for oil" (CIA 1960, 1961). In its view, ENI might encourage the Italian government to create a monopoly on the import of crude to Italy, thus excluding all foreign oil companies. The State Department, took a clearer stance and argued that,

> The ambition of Enrico Mattei [...] threatens to bring Italy into a dangerous position of subservience to the Iron Curtain bloc [...] we stand in danger of a

still much greater deal in line with which Italy would become a prime instrument for Russia for the penetration of European markets with Russian oil.[3]

The US also feared that the USSR might use the agreement to refine Soviet oil in the countries where ENI was building refineries, such as Ghana, Morocco and Tunisia and, eventually, become a member of OPEC, giving "the Soviets an extremely advantageous position in influencing Middle Eastern governments and [leading] to deterioration of relations between those governments and the Western oil companies."[4]

ENI's treaty with the USSR pushed the US to reach a compromise with Mattei. In 1961, W. Averell Harriman, John F. Kennedy's foreign policy advisor, met with Mattei and asked him to stop buying Soviet oil. During the meeting, ENI's President denounced American companies' discrimination against independent companies, and argued that the US did not understand how farsighted his policy was. The following year, the State Department requested Standard Oil (NJ) representatives to meet with Mattei and sign an agreement, and provide Italy with enough crude oil to meet a large percentage of its energy needs (Perrone 1995; Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963 1993a; Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-1963, 1995).

In October 1962, Mattei died in a plane crash, after his personal airplane was sabotaged (Li Vigni 2003). After his death, ENI's politics, both domestically and internationally, changed in several ways. While the company became more dependent on decisions taken by the Italian government, ENI's Presidents redefined the more aggressive strategies that had characterized the 1950s. In particular, ENI reduced its extracting activities in oil producing countries and became an importer of the crude oil American companies extracted in North Africa and the Middle East. In 1963, the company signed an agreement with Standard Oil (NJ), according to which the US firm would have provided ENI with 12.5 million tons of crude oil in exchange for equipment such as pipelines, and the possibility of refining its oil in Ingolstadt, Bavaria. Another treaty, signed that same year with Gulf Oil assured ENI another 12.5 million tons of crude oil. In 1965, the Italian company negotiated with Esso International Inc. and the Mediterranean Standard Oil Co. the import of 3 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year from Libya (Magini 1976).

In the mid-1960s, ENI was increasingly aware of the power oil producers, particularly through the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) – could exert on the international market, and of the need to reduce its dependence on them. The company diversified its sources of energy, by buying crude oil and

[3] Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (DDE), White House Office, Office of the Staff Secretary, Records, 1952-61, International Series, b.8.

[4] "Soviet Oil Offensive," February 6, 1961. National Archives and Records Administration, College Park (NARA), RG59, Bureau of Economic Affairs, Office of International Resources, Fuels and Energy Division, Records Relating to Fuels and Energy, 1953-1964, b.36.

natural gas from a variety of countries outside the Middle East. In 1963 ENI renewed its agreement with the USSR with a contract that assured Italy 25 million tons of crude oil by 1970. Furthermore, it started considering the possibility of buying natural gas from the Netherlands, and obtained a series of concessions in the North Sea (Magini 1976; Sapelli and Carnevali 1992).

These changes made ENI and Italy more vulnerable to the policies pursued by US oil companies, while at the same time antagonizing some of the oil producers with whom ENI dealt in the past (Briatico 2004). For instance, the 1963 and 1964 agreements with Standard Oil (NJ) marked a decline of the company's presence in Algeria. After the rise of Houari Boumedienne to power in 1965, ENI obtained a series of concessions to search for oil and natural gas in the desert, and built a refinery in Skikda, while its various affiliates took advantage of Algeria's rapid economic growth by establishing their presence in the North African country. The Italian company offered the Algerian government to sign an agreement, according to which the Algerian state would have become co-owner with AGIP of a mixed company in charge of exploring and extracting oil and natural gas. Yet, in 1965, the Algerian firm Sonatrach sent a letter to ENI stating that it could not accept its offer, as it "deprive[d] Algeria of its legitimate share of profits, which the country should obtain from a natural resource that belongs to it."[5] The fact that the Italian company had recently signed a contract with Standard Oil (NJ) was crucial in shaping Algeria's response (Milano 2013).[6]

3. Between the Six Day War and the "Oil Shock"

The Six Day War of 1967 had a deep and lasting effect on international policies in the Mediterranean, and on Italy's position in it (Ashton 2007; Pedaliu 2009). The closing of the Suez Canal and the Arab oil embargo were particularly detrimental for the country's economy, since two thirds of its oil supplies came from the Persian Gulf and were provided by US firms. As international oil companies searched for alternative transportation routes, the Atlantic acquired an increasingly important role, while the refineries located in Northwestern Europe partly replaced those of the Mediterranean, particularly of Italy (Di Nolfo 2012).[7]

Italy's response to the Six Day War and, more generally, to oil producers' use of the "oil weapon," was multifaceted (Caviglia and Cricco 2006). ENI

[5] ASE, Fondo ENI, Presidenza, Incarichi Speciali, b.73, f.2E92.

[6] ASE, Fondo ENI, Presidenza, Raffaele Girotti, b.76, f.3369; ASE, Fondo ENI, Struttura organizzativa, Presidenza, b.262, f.4819.

[7] "Stima dell'incidenza della chiusura del Canale di Suez sul costo dei rifornimenti di petrolio greggio in Italia," August 6, 1970, ASE, Fondo ENI, Segreteria del Presidente, Raffaele Girotti, b.127, f.3717.

strengthened its relationship with countries and companies that did not rely on the Suez Canal to trasport their oil. It signed a series of treaties with Libya, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the USSR (Tremolada 2014; Bucarelli 2014), and obtained concessions in countries that were not members of OPEC, such as Madagascar, the Congo, Argentina, Colombia, Indonesia, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, and Qatar. Thanks to these agreements, ENI increased the number of its concession sevenfold, and reached a production of 10.5 million tons of crude oil in 1971, compared to 3.7 in 1962 (Magini 1976).

Furthermore, ENI decided to invest heavily in the field of natural gas. In 1969 it signed a treaty with the USSR, which included the import of 100 trillion cubic meters of natural gas over a twenty-year period, in exchange for plants and machinery to be used in Soviet auto, chemical and petrochemical industries, as well as uranium enrichment technology. The following year, thanks to an agreement with the Netherlands, ENI started building the longest gas pipeline in Western Europe, which connected the Dutch fields to the West German, Swiss and Italian markets (Magini 1976, 182-5; Sapelli and Carnevali 1992).

Since Italy continued to be strongly dependent on the oil extracted in OPEC countries, and thus vulnerable to their decisions, ENI maintained a direct relationship with oil producers, in order to assure the Italian market a constant flow of oil. In 1970, an internal note emphasized the choice the company had to face between "maintain[ing] (and expand[ing]) the political credit which it benefits from and try[ing] to take advantage from it, or [...] align[ing] itself with the position taken by the big companies."[8] Therefore, it decided not join forces with the majors, and maintained a neutral position after the 1971 Teheran-Tripoli Agreements (Petrini 2012). In a context characterized by a growing tension between oil producers and international oil companies, ENI highlighted the need of pursuing an autonomous policy, based on new forms of economic cooperation, according to which "producing countries committed themselves to providing fixed quantities of crude oil [...] and consuming countries [...] committed themselves to providing technical assistance needed for the economic development of producing countries" (Labbate 2010, 125).[9]

On the other hand, on a political level, the Italian government, along with members of the Parliament, argued that the growing power of the oil producing world should lead to a profound transformation of international oil politics. Some supported the idea that the EEC should pursue a common energy policy and become more autonomous by investing in nuclear power. Others argued that, in order to assure Europe a constant and stable flow of oil, a shared Euro-

[8] "I problemi dell'ENI nel mercato internazionale," January 20, 1970, ASE, Fondo ENI, Estero Osservatori Commerciali, b.422, f.1F7F.

[9] "Alcune considerazioni sulla possibilità di instaurare rapporti diretti tra Paesi produttori e Paesi consumatori per l'approvvigionamento di petrolio," April 19, 1971, ASE, Fondo ENI, Estero, Rapporto con le organissasioni nazionali, b.441, f.1FBE.

pean approach should include Arab countries and lead to a redefinition of economic relations across the Mediterranean (Calandri 2003).

In the late 1960s, the main political parties – namely, the left-wing sectors of the DC, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) – promoted a new dialogue between Western Europe and the Arab world, as well as with the Eastern bloc. They pointed out that the forms of multipolarism and dialogue promoted by détente should be extended to the Mediterranean, and lead the EEC to support the end of the Arab-Israeli war, and the establishment of new, more equitable relations between oil producers and oil consumers. In this framework, Italy was supposed to play an important role, and become a mediator between Israel and Arab countries (Rostagni 2001; Giovagnoli and Pons 2003).

The main protagonist of Italy's renewed international policy was Aldo Moro, a member of the DC, who between 1969 and 1974 served as Foreign Minister. Moro advanced the idea that in order to avoid the outbreak of regional conflicts and overcome the destabilizing effects of bipolarism (particularly the military expansion of the Soviet Union in the Middle East), the Arab-Israeli conflict should become part of a new – and more autonomous - policy pursued by the EEC, and of multilateral forms of intervention led by the UN. In 1972, he argued that a conference of non-aligned countries in the Mediterranean should be organized, and that a meeting similar to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) should be held for the Mediterranean, and include all regional actors, along with the US and the USSR (Garzia, Monzali and Imperato 2013; Perfetti et al. 2011; Alfonsi 2013).

However, Moro and the Italian government walked a tightrope: while they critiqued Israel and aimed at establishing a special relationship with the Arab world, they also wanted to avoid creating any tensions with the US, especially in the Mediterranean. Both the US and the USSR were unwilling to recognize the EEC, let alone Italy, any mediating or autonomous role, especially in the Arab-Israeli conflict and in the energy sector. Nonetheless, between the late 1960s and the early 1970s, Moro used his growing influence in the Arab world to facilitate ENI's presence in several oil producing countries, particularly in Libya (Vandewalle 1998; Gurney 1996). While ENI had been present in the North African country since 1959 through the Compagnia Ricerca Idrocarburi (Hydrocarbon Research Company, CORI), until the rise of Muammar Gaddafi, the US government and American oil companies had largely constrained its activities. After the 1969 military coup, the Italian government established a special relationship with the new leader, in order to reduce its dependence on American oil companies, espe- cially after the Libyan government increased the price of the oil and natural gas it sold to Esso. As Muharmad Najm, Libya's Minister of Unity and Foreign Affairs of Unity and Foreign Affairs argued in 1970, the Libyan government aimed at "developing a fruitful cooperation between Libya and Italy, in the name of mutual respect [...] through commercial forms of exchange and specific agreements [...] thus contributing to the economic progress of our coun-

try in view of a prosperous future."[10] Thanks to the relationship between the Italian and the Libyan governments, in 1970, ENI signed an agreement to build a petrochemical plant in Bengazi and a refinery in Zavia, train Libyan technicians to operate the refinery, supply experts in Training and Development for the Libyan Petroleum Ministry, and assist in organizing a Petroleum High Institute, in exchange for oil and natural gas (Varvelli 2009; Cricco 2014).[11]

Following the nationalization of Libyan oil resources, in 1972 ENI was the first company to agree to the new terms set by the Libyan government, which asked for a 51% participation in the management of its oil industry. The company signed a treaty with the Libyan National Oil Corporation (NOC), according to which it recognized the Libyan state's right to own 50% (rather than 51%) of a joint oil company. Acting Secretary of State John N. Irwin II defined the agreement as setting "an unfortunate precedent for compensation at net book value" (Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976 2011, 352). Indeed, it was not long before the Libyan government nationalized the American firm Bunker Hunt, and acquired control over 51% of other companies, such as Oasis, Esso Standard Libya, and Mobiloil Libya (Cricco 2002; Vandewalle 1998).

4. The "Oil Shock" and the Redefinition of the Mediterranean

Faced with the growing power of the oil producing world, in the early 1970s the US administration called for a concerted effort among consuming countries, particularly the US and the EEC, to promote a shared energy policy (Adrianopoulos 1988; Hamilton and Salmon 2012). On both sides of the Atlantic, most governments (with the important exception of France) agreed that new forms of international cooperation should be implemented, and that a strategy centered on the pursuit of bilateral agreements with single oil producers would make consuming countries increasingly vulnerable.

However, between the end of 1973 and the early months of 1974 a series of differences emerged inside the Atlantic bloc. Whereas the EEC presented itself to oil producers as a privileged interlocutor, and promoted the idea that Europe should provide economic aid and promote financial investments in developing countries, the US feared that a Euro-Arab dialogue might lead to a radicalization

[10] Muharmad Najm to Aldo Moro, September 22, 1970. ASE, Fondo ENI, Direzione Estera, b.202, f.1713; ASE, Fondo ENI, Segreteria del Presidente, Eugenio Cefis, b.28.

[11] ASE, Fondo ENI, Direzione Estera, b.202, f.1713; Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Archivio Aldo Moro (AAM), b.139; ASE, Fondo ENI, Segreteria del Presidente, Eugenio Cefis, b.28, f.E85; ASE, Fondo ENI, Direzione Estera, b.203, f.1716; ASE, Fondo ENI, Direzione Estera, b.202, f.1712.

of Arab nationalism, and endorsed a common strategy among consumers (Siniver 2013; Lifset 2014).

The 1973 "oil shock" was particularly detrimental for the Italian economy, as it reduced the country's oil imports by 20% (the equivalent of 11% of the its energy needs). Despite ENI's efforts to differentiate its sources of energy, 75% of Italy's total needs continued to be provided by oil. As a result of the increase in oil prices, industrial production decreased, along with salaries, occupation rates and private consumption, while inflation rose, leading to a recession. The "oil shock" thus intersected with, and accelerated, growing and widespread social tensions (with the outbreak of terrorism) and political instability. In this context, access to cheap sources of oil was crucial not only to fuel factories, but also to prevent a social and political crisis (Garavini 2011; Venn 2002; Vernon 1976).

The Italian government's immediate reaction was to provide funding for the development of nuclear power plants, as it considered the possibility of substituting coal for oil, and of shutting down some of the thermoelectric plants that relied on oil as their main fuel. In order to provide a more long-term solution to the oil crisis, in December 1973 it created a special commission, which included ministries, private oil companies (national and foreign), as well as ENI. Its aim was to reorganize the country's oil sector and, in particular, promote an energy plan that could solve Italy's supply problems. It took the commission several months to draft what would become the Oil Plan. From the very start, it was clear that the energy policies of the past, which had made Italy strongly dependent on the oil extracted and sold by multinational oil companies, had to be abandoned. In particular, the government called for a greater role of the state in establishing relations with oil producers and strengthening ENI's position, as a public company representing Italy internationally and meeting its energy needs domestically (Magini 1976).

On an international level, since Arab producers defined Italy as a "neutral" nation, the Italian government and ENI presented themselves as allies of the Arab world. Given Italy's vulnerability, Moro pursued a cautious strategy: he strengthened the country's position inside the EEC and in Arab countries, while at the same time trying not to upset the US. Moro strongly supported the idea that the EEC should adopt a more pro-Arab policy, and endorsed the EEC's November 6, 1973 declaration in support of a just peace between Israel and Arab countries. While this decision allowed the EEC to avoid any further sanctions on the part of Arab producers, it also placed its members in a difficult position vis à vis the US, leading the State Department to point out that "the Europeans are seeking their identity in opposition to the US" (Labbate 2010, 158; Garzia, Monzali and Imperato 2013).[12]

[12] "Memorandum of Conversation about US-European Relations," November 28, 1973, NARA, NPMP, Presidential HAK MemCons.

Italy played a particularly important role during the European Summit, held in Copenhagen in December 1973, aimed at identifying a common policy to solve the crisis. The summit proposed to implement new forms of cooperation between the EEC and oil producers, based on the exchange of oil for development aid, and was fully supported by various delegations from Algeria, Tunisia, and the Sudan. Before and during the summit, the US administration pressured EEC members not to pursue an autonomous policy and obtain preferential treatment from Arab producers (Garavini 2011; Mourlon-Druol and Romero 2014). Just a few days before the Summit, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who was in Brussels to attend a meeting of Foreign Ministers, in a conversation with Moro critiqued the decision to exclude the US from any discussions about energy issues. As was often the case, Moro tried to play a mediating role and emphasized the importance of strengthening transatlantic relations, and the strong friendship that bound together Italy and the US despite the "oil shock." In response, Kissinger advanced the idea that consumer countries should establish an energy action group in order to develop a full-scale cooperation in the field of energy (Labbate 2010, 172-3; Del Pero 2010; Mockli 2011; Pierantonio 2010).[13]

At the same time, Moro continued to pursue a pro-Arab policy, especially after the visit, early in 1974, of the Saudi and Algerian oil Ministers, Ahmed Zzaki Yamani and Belaid Abdessalam, who pressured Moro to take a clearer stance on the Arab-Israeli War by supporting Israel's withdrawal from all the territories occupied in 1967. Following the visit, Moro gave a speech at the Senate's Foreign Commission, in which he emphasized the importance of recognizing Palestinian rights, and the need to put an end to Israel's policies. He reminded his audience of the importance of Italy's endorsement of the EEC's November 6 declaration, and the crucial role Italy had played in making it possible. Furthermore, he highlighted the long history of the country's friendship with the Arab world, and the importance of promoting a Euro-Arab dialogue. As he put it, "This is not only about guaranteeing oil supplies, but of sharing our various resources to implement an effective form of integration, that [...] makes room for developing countries, which should participate in a common prosperity" (Labbate 2010, 192-3).[14]

It was in this context that Moro established a series of relations with Arab countries, partly because of his firm belief in Italy's mediating role in the Mediterranean, and partly because of the country's strong dependence on Arab oil. Between the end of January and the beginning of February 1974, Moro travelled to North Africa and the Middle East, and paved the way for a series of agreements for the import of oil from Libya and Saudi Arabia in exchange for

[13] "Memorandum of Conversation between Secretary of State Kissinger and Italian Foreign Minister Aldo Moro," December 10, 1973, NARA, NPMP, Presidential HAK MemCons.

[14] "Discorso del ministro Moro alla Commissione Esteri del Senato," January 23, 1974, ACS, AAM, b.31.

development aid and technology. Italy's autonomous initiatives, along with those of other Western European countries, received strong criticism from the US administration. As President Richard Nixon put it during a meeting held at the beginning of February 1974, "if they [the Europeans] keep going into business for themselves, it will lead to the US turning against Europe and opening their weak states to the Soviet Union" (*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976* 2011, 879-80; Petrini 2008).

ENI, for its part, pursued a policy centered on autonomous talks with OPEC and the signing of bilateral treaties with oil producers. By recognizing oil producers' willingness to gain control over their oil resources through various forms of participation, ENI was able to establish relations with countries such as Libya, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, even after they nationalized their oil resources in the early 1970s.[15] Its contracts usually included the exchange of oil for infrastructures, technology and know-how, and oil producers' participation in joint ventures. By doing so, ENI responded to their requests while at the same time keeping its expenses low.[16]

In October 1973, ENI signed an agreement with the Algerian State-owned firm Sonatrach, which followed a long series of negotiations that had started in the early 1960s. The treaty established a mixed company between the Società Nazionale Metanodotti (Gas Pipeline National Company, SNAM) and Sonatrach, in charge of building a pipeline (TRANSMED) linking Algeria to Sicily through Tunisia. The project would have allowed Italy to import 11.7 trillion cubic meters of natural gas per year for twenty five years, the equivalent of 70% of the country's energy needs at the time. However, it was delayed for various reasons, the most important being that, following the increase of oil prices, Tunisia asked for higher revenues. In 1977, the parties signed another contract to import 12.36 trillion cubic meters of natural gas per year for twenty five years, starting in 1981. The pipeline started being built in 1978 and was officially inaugurated in 1983 (Milano 2013; Hayes 2006).[17]

One of the most important achievements of Italy's policies was the strengthening of its relations with Libya. Moro's role was crucial in facilitating ENI's presence and position in the country. In 1974, after the Italian delegation to the UN voted in support of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and after Moro visited Libya, the Italian government signed the so-called "Jallud-Rumor Protocol," from the names of the Italian Prime Minister Mariano Rumor and the Libyan Minister Abdessalam Ahmed Jallud. According to the agreement, , ENI would import 30 million tons of oil every year in exchange for technology, the

[15] ASE, Fondo ENI, Estero, Direzione Estero, b.293, f.38; ASE, Fondo ENI, Estero, Rapporti con le organizzazioni nazionali e internazionali, b.288; ASE, Fondo ENI, Segreteria, Girotti, b.107.
[16] ACS, AAM, b. 136.
[17] ASE, Fondo ENI, Estera, b.11; ASE, Fondo ENI, Struttura Organizzativa, Presidenza, b.254, f.47D5.

training of Libyan technicians, the participation of Italian firms in the industrialization of Libya, particularly in the building of petrochemical and fertilizer plants, and the promotion of agricultural development projects.[18]

Another treaty signed in 1975, during a visit by Jallud to Italy, assigned ENI a special role in the exploration, extraction and transport of Libyan oil and natural gas. It also gave ENI and Italian firms the task of building a refinery in Tobruk, as well as petrochemical plants and pipelines. Following the agreement, Italy was able to increase its oil imports from Libya from 445 million to more than 1.5 billion lira, and more than double its exports to Libya (Varvelli 2009).[19]

The US administration supported ENI's presence in Libya and recognized the importance the Italian company might have in providing cheap fuel to the Italian economy and, in so doing, solve some of its social problems. It also hoped that by encouraging its Libyan activities it might divert the Italian company away from other, more important, oil producing countries such as Saudi Arabia, with which ENI had signed an agreement for the import of 65,000 barrels of oil per day. As J. K. Jamieson, Chairman of Exxon put it in a meeting with Kissinger, the implication of such deals was that "more and more oil that was Aramco oil is being diverted to these other countries on government-to-government deals. So we are losing effectively oil that was under our control before" (*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976* 2011, 963).

5. Reshaping Transatlantic Relations at the Energy Conference

The Energy Conference, held in Washington DC in February 1974, aimed at defining a new policy among consuming countries, brought to light a series of differences inside the Atlantic Alliance on how to shape international oil politics and relations between oil producers and oil consumers. Indeed, the Conference, which eventually led to the creation of the International Energy Agency (IEA), represented a testing ground for the Atlantic Alliance. It marked the decline of any common European approach to the crisis and the establishment of new forms of cooperation across the Atlantic (Kapstein 1990).

Moro immediately accepted Nixon's invitation to attend the Conference, since "it consider[ed] the meeting in Washington as an "initiative that could promote a productive dialogue between all interested countries, to find a quick and fair solution to the oil problem." At the same time, he worried that it might lead producers to think that "this initiative aims at creating a bloc of oil con-

[18] "L'Agip estenderà le ricerche in Libia di idrocarburi," Il Sole 24 ore, February 27, 1974; ASE, Fondo ENI, Struttura Organizzativa, Presidenza, b.202, f.4819.
[19] ACS, AAM, b.139; ASE, Fondo ENI, Direzione Estera, b.203, f.1716.

suming countries intended to confront, in an antagonistic way, oil producing countries." He went on to argue that "the meeting in Washington should not interfere with the activities promoted in Copenhagen [...] of a direct dialogue between Europe and oil producing countries, especially those located in the Mediterranean region and in the Near East."[20] Roberto Ducci, Director of Political Affairs of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, highlighted the importance for Italy of endorsing France's support of a Euro-Arab dialogue, and emphasized the need of linking economic with security issues, while at the same time encouraging the government representatives to adopt a cautious stance, in order not to upset the US (Labbate 2010, 181-2; Gfeller 2012).

At the conference, Moro supported the idea that the oil crisis could be solved only through international cooperation, not only among oil producing and oil consuming countries, but also with developing nations. The Italian Foreign Minister was well aware of the growing importance and role underdeveloped countries had after they had established the Group of 77 inside the UN (Calandri 2013; Garavini 2012).[21] However, his arguments remained marginal, as participants clashed around France's autonomous – and anti-American – stance, while Moro refused to take a position that could be criticized by the US. His convoluted speech in Italian remained unheard, as translators refused to make sense of it, stating publicly that "it [did not] make any sense anyway" (Colitti 2008, 158). For Italy, the Energy Conference marked the decline of any autonomous policy inside the EEC or the Atlantic bloc. As Marcello Colitti, who was present in Washington and was a top manager inside ENI, put it, "This is how Italy's attempt to promote its own energy policy or its own approach to the Third world, ended, in ridicule; Moro's untranslatable sentenc- es buried all that we had tried to build in so many years of hard work" (Colitti 2008, 157-8). Italy remained too weak, economically and politically, to pursue a coherent strategy, and Moro was profoundly convinced of the importance of maintaining the unity of the EEC and avoid any rupture with the US.[22]

The Energy Conference represented an important turning point for transatlantic relations. While the EEC, with its internal divisions, proved unable to promote a shared policy toward oil consuming countries, the US succeeded in pushing the EEC and its members to follow a common energy policy, and critiqued any country that pursued bilateral relations with single oil producers. After the Energy Conference, the EEC continued to promote a Euro-Arab dialogue, but excluded energy policies from its agenda (Calandri 2003).

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[20] "Appunto MAE", January 18, 1974, ACS, AAM, b.36; "Appunto del direttore generale degli Affari Politici del MAE, Roberto Ducci, per il ministro Moro," January 13, 1974, ACS, AAM, b.31.

[21] "Intervento dell'on. Ministro (Aldo Moro) alla conferenza di Washington, Appunto MAE," February 11, 1974, ACS, AAM, b.36.

[22] "Colloquio dell'On. Ministro con l'Ambasciatore Volpe," March 29, 1974, ACS, AAM, b.158.

It was in this context, in March 1974, the Italian Parliament approved the Oil Plan, which ENI's Presidente Raffaele Girotti defined as "the first attempt carried out in our country to plan the development of a sector which is fundamental in meeting the country's energy needs."[23] The Plan established a "public responsibility concerning the satisfaction of the country's oil needs," and assigned the state and the government the task of strengthening oil consuming countries' ability to shape international oil politics (AA.VV. 1974; Girotti 1974). Furthermore, it encouraged the "development [...] of foreign and commercial policies aimed at facilitating and promoting new ways of supplying oil, based on forms of exchange, investments in industrial sectors, and economic cooperation" (AA.VV. 1974, 54).

The Oil Plan assigned ENI a particularly important role, as it required the company to provide the government with the technical expertise needed to meet Italy's energy needs. It encouraged ENI to expand its exploration activities in Italy and internationally, gave it priority in the refining sector, increased the percentage of oil and natural gas it could import from abroad, and raised the company's endowment fund. As ENI's house organ put it, by assuring "a consistent presence in the market of the state-owned company – which is a tool of direct intervention of the state in the oil industry –, the country can increase the degree of security of its oil supplies" (AA.VV. 1974).

The approval of the Oil Plan represented a particularly important moment in the history of Italian energy policies. On the one hand, it promoted new forms of exchange and cooperation between the state and the oil company in the field of international oil politics, and envisioned a new role for Italy in the Mediterranean and inside the EEC. On the other hand, it strengthened ENI's role as a national economic planning tool, by linking the provisioning of energy resources to the achievement of full employment, the increase of mass consumption and the provisioning of social services, and the end of imbalances between the North and the South – all symbols of Italy's prosperity and membership in the EEC and the Atlantic community (AA.VV. 1974).

However, the Plan was approved too late to be effective, and was never implemented. Nonetheless, Moro continued to support the idea that a Euro-Arab dialogue was necessary. He endorsed a UN conference on natural resources, and strengthened relations with non-aligned leaders such as Algeria's Prime Minister Boumedienne. Starting in 1975, when he became President of the EEC, Moro argued that Europe should pursue forms of economic cooperation not only in oil producing countries, but in all developing nations. The debates that accompanied the organization of the CSCE created an important venue where to discuss issues

[23] Raffaele Girotti, La programmazione energetica nazionale in Italia nel quadro della situazione mondiale delle fonti di approvvigionamento, May 1974, ASE, Fondo ENI, Programmazione, b.17, f.388E; ASE, Fondo ENI, Presidenza Girotti, Segreteria, b.107, f.12F; ASE, Fondo ENI, Studi Economico-Tecnici, b.7, f.4251.

concerning international cooperation in the field of energy resources, and link them to the process of détente. Arab countries, especially Algeria, largely supported Moro's position, and it was in part thanks to him that North African countries had a voice at the Helsinki conference in 1975, through which to advance their own political and economic requests.

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